

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 2007-11

WHEREAS, the State is committed to improving services to abused and neglected children who are placed in foster care so that they find permanent homes as quickly as possible; and

WHEREAS, in many cases, some children in foster care cannot be returned to their biological parents and must be assessed for and provided adoption opportunities; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of South Carolina have an overriding interest in assuring that all foster children receive quality and effective legal, judicial, and social services by providing permanent homes in an expeditious manner; and

WHEREAS, in South Carolina it takes 45.2 months to finalize the average adoption process compared to the national average of 43.8 months while South Carolinians expect that the process through adoption finalization should take no more than 24 months; and

WHEREAS, 3,958 children were adopted in South Carolina in the past ten years and 449 were adopted this past year; and

WHEREAS, because the citizens of South Carolina expect an efficient, accessible, quality adoption process, expeditiously finding permanent homes for the state's abused and neglected children and foster children waiting for adoptive families must be a priority for the State of South Carolina.

NOW, THEREFORE, I do hereby establish the Children in Foster Care and Adoption Services Task Force ("Task Force") and the Children in Foster Care and Adoption Services Advisory Committee ("Advisory Committee").

1. The Task Force shall:

a) study the issues and problems associated with the South Carolina foster care and adoption process and procedures and submit recommendations to improve adoption and foster care services and reduce wait times for adoptions;

b) consist of two chairs and no more than twenty-five additional members appointed by the Governor, to include adoptive and foster parents, an adoption attorney, a representative of a private adoption agency, a representative from the Guardian ad Litem Program, a representative from both the state and local Foster Care Review Board, a family court judge, members of the South Carolina House of Representatives and members of the South Carolina Senate;

c) be authorized to hold public meetings and take such actions as it deems necessary and

advisable to achieve its purpose; and

d) meet as needed and submit an initial report no later than February 1, 2008.

2. The Advisory Committee shall:

a) serve as an advisory body to the Governor and the Director of the Department of Social Services on matters relating to foster care and adoption services.

b) be comprised of no more than six members and the Chair must be one of the Task Force co-chairs.

3. The Governor's Office and the Department of Social Services shall provide staff support as necessary to assist the Task Force in carrying out the directives of this Executive Order.

This Order shall take effect immediately.

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND THE GREAT SEAL OF THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA, THIS 19th DAY OF JULY, 2007

MARK SANFORD
Governor

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